

Mapping a new course

Like many of the roads he mapped for a past employer, John Crane's career has not always followed a straight path. But John's interest in technology has led him to a position that must seem much more like a freeway than a side street.

John joined HCA almost three years ago and now serves as PC Support Lead Technician for HCA Information Technology (IT). Prior to joining HCA, John helped produce one of Southern California's most useful reference tools, Thomas Brothers Maps. In fact, John received his IT introduction during his 13-year career with Thomas Brothers, where he said "anyone with computer aptitude" was invited to join the company's new Information Systems Department. John started with the company during the days when they used to take photographs of hand-drawn maps, and left after the company had progressed to digital mapmaking. "Thomas Brothers was like a big family, but the company was being sold to Rand McNally so I started looking for a new position. I found the opportunity with HCA on the Internet, interviewed with Nancy Biddle and I was hired nine months later," John recalled.

During his three years with HCA, John has seen tremendous growth in the area of Information Technology. "We have about 2,700 users in 85 locations, and a staff of 17 field techs to keep up with all of their needs. There are so many more users



and they are becoming more computer savvy, so they want to do more, which is fun for us." John's duties include overseeing the acquisition of computer hardware and software, as well as desk-
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County steps up emergency preparedness

Even before the horrible September 11 attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., HCA had initiated efforts to increase the Agency's preparedness for a potential disaster.

The process of revising the Agency's Disaster Plan actually started in August, according to Herb Rosenzweig, Deputy Agency Director/Medical and Institutional Health Services. This update should be completed in a few weeks and training will be offered to update the abilities of HCA staff to respond to all types of disasters and provide information on their role in disaster response.

The Agency's Disaster Plan is an essential tool in the event of any major incident, from a natural disaster like an earthquake to a man-made event. Efforts are also underway to reestablish a high-level operations committee dealing with emergency preparedness.

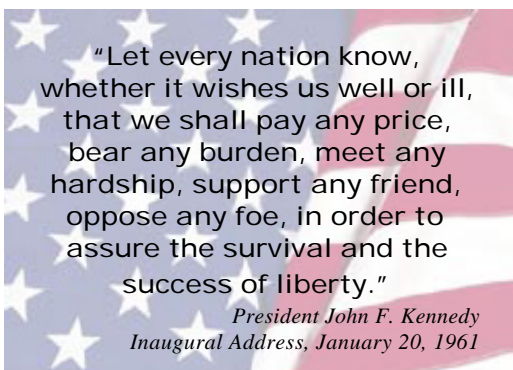
Public Health's Communicable Disease Control and Epidemiology staff have been involved in efforts to urge community health care providers to be extremely vigilant in diagnosing and reporting any unusual illnesses or patterns of illnesses that could be indicators of a biological or chemical terrorism event. The process

known as disease surveillance is extremely important in providing early notice to public health officials and health care providers, allowing timely and appropriate care to those potentially exposed to harmful agents.

Medical and Institutional Health's Emergency Medical Services has been working closely with hospitals, paramedics and other emergency providers to ensure the availability of current information on responding to potential biological and chemical emergencies. This includes providing guidance on treatment protocols, necessary protective equipment and other readiness information.

Staff members from Financial and Administrative Services have commenced an inventory of emergency supplies to ensure that our Agency personnel have the resources they need to serve the public in the event of an emergency, as well as the items they would

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*President John F. Kennedy
Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961*

Therapist of the Year selected

California Children's Services (CCS) Medical Therapy Program has recognized Victoria Vu, a Registered Occupational Therapist, as the Medical Therapy Program's Therapist of the Year.

Victoria is a staff occupational therapist at the Fountain Valley Medical Therapy Unit and has been with CCS since July 1995. A graduate of the University of Southern California, Victoria completed her pediatric internship with CCS and accepted a career opportunity with HCA. CCS staffers say Victoria has excellent rapport and has developed strong working relationships with her co-workers, clients and families. She is always willing to share her knowledge with others and serves as a mentor to new staff and student interns. Using her Vietnamese language skills, Victoria translates for staff and patients and has translated many forms used at the Medical Therapy Unit. She has also been recognized for her willingness to accept other responsibilities, including representing CCS at health fairs and participating in



Victoria Vu receives the Therapist of the Year Award from California Children's Services Chief Therapist Cathy Babiak.

OCEA/County negotiations.

Away from work, Victoria is extremely active in the community, representing her profession and helping to meet the needs of the Vietnamese community. She travels to remote villages in Vietnam to assist in

providing medical care and has recently used her expertise as an occupational therapist to teach splinting techniques to Vietnamese rehabilitation workers. She also volunteers with a local organization that collects durable medical equipment that is sent to remote areas of Vietnam.

CCS established the Therapist of the Year Award ten years ago to recognize a wor-

thy staff physical therapist, occupational therapist, certified occupational therapy assistant or physical therapy assistant. The award is named in honor of the late Kathy McCarthy, an occupational therapist who spent most of her 25-year career with HCA. CCS staff members submit nominations for the award, detailing the nominee's accomplishments in the areas of leadership, community service and professional organization participation.

Gold Star

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top support and help desk services. The growth in users will continue with the implementation of the Agency's Enterprise MIS system, and many of these users will need assistance in maintaining connectivity to the system at non-county sites.

Each day presents new challenges, as you might imagine considering the HCA Help Desk receives over 8,000 phone calls a year. In addition to the daily calls for minor hardware and software problems, there are many pressing needs to contend with, including virus attacks and system "crashes" that require data recovery efforts. John says he is fortunate to work with a technical staff that is up to the challenge. "Our techs are extremely flexible and easy to work with as a team. In addition to being highly productive, I think they set a good example in the field," and John often receives compliments from HCA staff about the positive attitudes of the field staff. John believes that attitude stems from their view of their role within HCA. "Our job is to provide them with the best possible tools to do their job. Our philosophy is to serve them, and that's what we do," stated John. Those who work with John say he plays a major role in creating that positive atmosphere for the staff. According to Scott Miller of Information Technology, "John is a dedicated employee and an excellent role model for the other technicians in PC Support."

John's job often involves teaching, but he finds that to be among the most enjoyable parts of his job. "When you show someone how to do something they didn't know could be done, you often make their job easier and that's very rewarding." He also enjoys investigating new technology and learning how it can help the Agency achieve its mission and goals. And there's never a shortage of things to do. "It never ends and I never feel caught up, because once you've completed a task, there are so many things that remain to be done." Among some of John's accomplishments with HCA are serving as the Desktop coordinator for the Agency's successful Y2K project and heading the evaluation and implementation of IT's help desk software project.

The future of HCA Information Technology is an exciting one, as John sees equipment become "smaller, lighter and more mobile." In that sense, John is in the perfect position to help map HCA's computing future, as he once helped commuters find their way to new destinations.

Plaza packed for Pollution Prevention



Environmental Health's James Hendron leads participants in the Pollution Prevention Day event through an interactive display.

Preventing pollution is everyone's job. That's why the annual celebration of National Pollution Prevention Week, hosted by HCA Environmental Health, drew such a large crowd to the Hall of Administration Plaza on Thursday, September 20.

The special event brings together many organizations dedicated to protecting Orange County's environment, including many Environmental Health programs. Other participants in the event included Orange County Integrated Waste Management Department, Orange County Coastkeeper, Southern California Edison, 76 Lubricants/Firebird Re-refined Oil, Disney Environmental, the Orange County Sanitation District and the Orange County Water District. Each booth offered pollution prevention information, as well as useful incentives such as oil drain pans to collect used motor oil for recycling.

Fighting off the flu

Public Health Immunization Clinics will be busy in November with the start of influenza or flu shot programs for high-risk individuals.

The HCA program provides flu shots for specified groups in need of protection from influenza, including:

- People age 60 and older
- Individuals with chronic diseases such as asthma and other respiratory problems, kidney disease, anemia, heart disease and diabetes
- Women who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the influenza season
- Children on long-term aspirin therapy
- Individuals with suppressed immune systems

While not provided through the county program, flu shots are also recommended for health care workers or those who care for high-risk individuals.

So what should you do if you just want to avoid the miserable symptoms that go along with influenza? According to Employee Health Services Director, Dr. Loretta Lee, one of the first steps to consider is getting a flu shot from your physician or other usual health care provider. Nationwide, influenza vaccine supplies are expected to be adequate this year, and by the time mid-November rolls around, most providers will have received their vaccine shipments for the year. The vaccine is 70% to 90% effective in preventing influenza among healthy adults if it is administered at least 2 weeks before exposure.

There are some other precautions that you can take to reduce your chance of contracting the flu or other viruses during their traditional season. Avoiding or limiting contact with ill persons and frequently washing your hands can reduce, but will not eliminate, the risk of infection. Anyone who is coughing or sneezing should cover his or her nose and mouth with a handkerchief to limit spread of the virus. However, influenza vaccine does not protect against respiratory illness caused by other viruses.

To help keep others healthy, you should limit your exposure to others if you have symptoms such as a cough, sore throat, or fever. This could mean avoiding activities or places where people are crowded together indoors, such as restaurants, bars and movie theaters. As with any illness, if you feel that you are having difficulty breathing, you should consult a physician and seek immediate medical attention.

United Way Campaign concludes

As the 2001 United Way Campaign draws to a close, HCA employees have dedicated their time, talent and effort over the past month to raising funds that support over 100 local health and human service agencies.

The HCA United Way effort started

September 19th with a special reception honoring the service area coordinators, who captain their areas in the drive toward a successful campaign. This year's theme for the Orange County drive, "Teaming Up For A Stronger Orange County," recognized that it takes all of us to make the campaign a success and that we are able to accomplish more through teamwork than we could ever achieve as individuals. Other events during the month included the annual United Way Kickoff on the Hall of Administration Plaza,

an interagency Jeopardy game competition, a golf tournament and dozens of "local" events that gave each HCA employee an opportunity to join in the fun.

October 3rd brought the annual County of Orange Kick-off Event on the Hall of Administration plaza, with HCA staff members donning the colors of the Miami Dolphins and decorating the booth with other football paraphernalia as part of this year's team competition. A menu featuring Chinese food drew a continuous line of hungry patrons to the HCA booth during the festive event.

A new addition to the United

Way campaign was the National Response Fund, which allowed participants to assist victims of the September 11th terrorist attack on America. A favorite of HCA this year was the patriotic Flag Pin, made of safety pins and colored beads, which allowed employees the chance to show their pride in the Red, White and



Sporting the colors of the Miami Dolphins, members of the HCA United Way team staff the Agency's booth at the Kickoff Celebration. Patriotic pins featuring red, white and blue beads were big sellers along with the traditional Chinese food menu.

Blue each day. In fact, the pins proved so popular that demand outpaced the ability of craft stores to keep the brightly colored beads in stock! Through sales of the popular pins, HCA raised more than \$4,000 for the National Response Fund with orders for the pins continuing to stream in. The day of the United Way kick-off alone, almost 250 pins were sold to county employees interested in showing off their patriotic spirit.

If you haven't sent in your annual United Way Pledge yet, please do so ASAP. And thanks for helping to make

this year's County of Orange United Way Campaign a great success!



HCA United Way Coordinators pose for a picture with Agency Director Julie Poulson during a special reception held in their honor.

Emergency preparedness

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need to support the staff during the first hours following a disaster.

The events of September 11th also served as a reminder that HCA staff members would play an essential role in the county's response to any emergency. By state law, each County employee is designated as a disaster service worker, required to report for duty in the event of an emergency. Employees will be asked to perform tasks similar to their current work assignments and certain other tasks, such as answering telephones, may be assigned. Employees will not be asked to perform jobs for which they are not qualified.

The fast changing national situation has also heightened the concerns of the public about their personal safety. In response to the expression of these concerns, HCA assisted the Board of Supervisors and County Executive Office in preparing useful public information on personal and family preparedness.

Frequently Asked Questions About Biological and Chemical Terrorism

• What about anthrax? Is there a vaccine I can get for my family and me?

The form of anthrax that health authorities are most concerned about is inhalational anthrax, which occurs when a person breathes in anthrax spores. Anthrax vaccine is not available to the general public. Inhalational anthrax is not contagious, so it does not spread from person to person. Healthy people who come into contact with persons sick with inhalational anthrax cannot acquire the disease. It can be treated with antibiotics. In the event of an outbreak, there are plans in place to provide antibiotics to those exposed to the disease. Should you have any specific concerns, you should talk with your doctor.

• What about smallpox? Is there a vaccine I can get for my family and me?

Routine smallpox vaccinations were discontinued in the 1970s after the disease was eradicated. Vaccine is not currently available to the public. A supply of smallpox vaccine would be sent to affected areas if an outbreak occurs and would be used to protect citizens and emergency workers. Routine vaccination is not recommended because the vaccine may cause serious side effects and there is no natural risk of exposure. Health authorities will recommend vaccination only if there is clear evidence that the disease

Compliance training in full swing

Compliance is now more than a concept for HCA staff members, with almost 2,000 employees attending Compliance Program Training during September and October.

More than 50 sessions were held during the first four weeks of Compliance Training, as teams of trainers joined with members of the HCA Executive Team and Compliance Committee to provide an essential introduction to the new program. A main feature of the training is a review of the Agency's new Code of Conduct, entitled "Excellence In Action," which provides guidance on applying Compliance standards to our unique jobs and responsibilities. Participants also used their new skills to provide solutions to a number of case scenarios specially designed to provide real-life examples of potential compliance issues.

A total of 80 Compliance sessions are scheduled during the initial rounds of training, providing space for all HCA employees and representatives of the Agency's contractors. Compliance

training will also become an integral part of training for all new HCA employees and HCA staff will participate in annual Compliance training refresher sessions to keep knowledge of the program and the HCA Code of Compliance up to date.

HCA is also setting the example for other county agencies now considering the implementation of Compliance programs.



Compliance trainers Casey Dorman, Ph.D., and John Van Sky, Ph.D., of Behavioral Health Services prepare for a training session. Almost 40 trainers are providing Compliance education for HCA staff during 80 initial sessions.

has resurfaced and residents of the U.S. are at risk of being infected.

• Should I have my own supply of antibiotics?

There's no reason for stockpiling antibiotics. Many antibiotics are effective for a variety of diseases, but there is no antibiotic that is effective against all diseases. Because antibiotics can cause side effects, they should only be taken with medical supervision. Antibiotics also have a limited "shelf life" before they lose their strength.

• Is our drinking water safe?

Intentional contamination of the water supply is thought to be highly unlikely. Water treatment facilities routinely filter the drinking water supply, add chlorine in order to kill harmful germs and regularly test for contaminants.

• Should gas masks be kept on hand?

There are many types of masks or ventilators, but no one type protects against all chemicals or germs. In addition, "gas" masks can cause serious injury or even death when used improperly, espe-

cially among people with certain lung problems. "Gas" masks purchased at surplus stores or off the Internet carry no guarantees that they will work.

• What can I do to protect my family and myself?

Be alert to your own health and that of your family. Report any unusual symptoms or illnesses to your health care provider. To prepare for potential emergencies or disasters, including events like earthquakes, families should keep some basic emergency supplies at home. The American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency offer information on family emergency preparedness.

• What if my anxiety about bioterrorism is having a serious impact on my family and work life?

Given the recent events, it is understandable for citizens to feel anxious. If your anxiety keeps you from doing the things you would normally do, it might be helpful to talk with someone. Your health care provider can make a referral if you do not already have a counselor or mental health professional in mind.

ACS website gains recognition from CSAC

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) has selected the Animal Care Services' Web Site as a winner in its annual Challenge Award competition, recognizing the popular Internet destination as one of the 12 most creative county programs in the state.

According to CSAC Executive Director Steven Szalay, "The Challenge Awards Program represents the very best of county government. The programs highlighted each year demonstrate how California's 58 counties are striving to continuously serve their constituents more efficiently and cost-effectively."

The ACS website has been upgraded to provide convenient and easy-to-use services to the public, including an Adopt-A-Pet feature providing photos and information about animals available for adoption; a lost-and-found section that provides up-to-date information about animals impounded and awaiting redemption; and an area on deceased animals picked up by an Animal Care Officer that is designed to provide closure to pet owners looking for their lost animals.

The ACS Website made its debut in June 2000 and now attracts more than 100,000 visits each month.

The recognition of the ACS website is the only Challenge Award received this year by Orange County programs. The Awards are officially presented at the CSAC Annual Meeting, held during November in Sacramento. Judges selected the Animal Care site for recognition from among 174 entries submitted by 33 counties. The entries were judged based on innovation, creativity, resourcefulness, effectiveness, collaboration, cost savings and the ability to be duplicated in other counties.



The Animal Care Services website was truly a demonstration of how teamwork can bring great accomplishments. Among those involved in the project were (l-r): Kathy Francis, Animal Care Services Public Education; Kerry Wilson, HCA Public Information and Communication Web Coordinator; Emmanuel Soheyli of HCA Information Technology; Irene Anderson, Animal Care Services Office Supervisor; and Lt. Ron Coleman, Animal Care Services Field Supervisor.

Children's health care access studied

While the exact number is difficult to determine, everyone agrees that there are tens of thousands of children in Orange County who do not have health care coverage.

Current estimates of the number of Orange County children without health insurance coverage range from 90,000 to 140,000. To help provide a solution to this challenging issue, a Health Care Agency initiative is pulling together community leaders and organizations to develop a plan to achieve the goal of ensuring every child has comprehensive health insurance and a medical home.

The Children's Healthcare Access Initiative, or CHAI, has conducted community input sessions in Orange, Anaheim, Garden Grove and Costa Mesa to gather input from Orange County citizens on possible ways to overcome the major barriers to coverage for children that were identified during the Initiative's initial study. These areas are:

- Issues regarding enrollment, disenrollment and retention in Public Insurance Programs;

- Issues surrounding children from low income families who are ineligible for public insurance programs;

- Issues surrounding children of working parents who are uninsured.

Deputy Agency Director/County Health Officer

Dr. Mark Hortor is serving as the Co-Chairman of CHAI and HCA staff have been actively involved in providing support for the activities of the initiative. Community input from the four meetings held during October will be used to help develop a strategic plan for overcoming these barriers to obtaining health care coverage.

Over 80 individuals participated in the initial session and similar turnouts were hoped for at all of the scheduled meetings, with all participants working toward the goal of helping Orange County's children.



Small group sessions like this one were a major activity of the Community Input Sessions held for the Children's Health Access Initiative. Information provided at the sessions will help the group develop solutions to overcoming the barriers to health care coverage for children.

HCA holiday traditions

The holiday season is fast approaching and HCA is getting into the spirit by taking part in several traditional seasonal programs, including Holiday Hope, which matches contributions from HCA staff with families in need of assistance.

Last year, more than 700 families benefitted from Holiday Hope, which provides food-related assistance to families. Holiday Hope organizers are specifically requesting donations of cash or grocery store gift certificates this year because of the diverse needs of families in our communities. Donations are needed through mid-December, as assistance is provided in the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas. If you'd like more information on the Holiday Hope program, please contact HCA Volunteer Services at 834-6620 or 834-4144.

Behavioral Health's Children and Youth Services is ready for their big holiday event, the Holiday Boutique, which raises money for CYS children and those served by CYS contract agencies. According to Sharon Modaff of CYS-Project Together, the Boutique will be held November 15th from 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. in the 4th Floor Conference Rooms at 405 W. 5th Street in Santa Ana. The event will be a perfect way to get in the holiday mood, with holiday music, tea and treats provided while you browse the boutique filled with crafts, seasonal items and other treasures.

we're on-line!

You can check out the latest issues of the Health Care Agency's newsletters by using this URL:

<http://www.oc.ca.gov/hca/newslett.htm>

WHAT'S UP

What's UP is a newsletter for employees of the County of Orange, CA, Health Care Agency.

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PH reorganization unveiled

Following action by the Board of Supervisors, more than half of all HCA Public Health employees have participated in communications meetings focused on Public Health's Reorganization.

The Public Health reorganization is designed to achieve goals including:

- Increased participation in and accountability for management responsibilities and decision-making at all levels of the organization;
- Increased integration and collaboration between programs;
- Increased focus on clients and outcomes;
- Strengthening of capacities in the areas of medical consultation and clinical supervision.

One of the first elements of the plan was completed with the selection of Steve Thronson to serve as Chief of Public Health Operations. Within Public Health, there will be six new Divisions:

- Health Promotion
- Family Health
- Public Health Nursing
- California Children Services
- Public Health Laboratory
- Disease Control and Epidemiology

Public Health will also have a Chief Medical Officer, a Director of Nursing and Medical Directors for Maternal and Child Health, Pulmonary Diseases and Tuberculosis, and HIV and Special Diseases.



Team HCA completed the Multiple Sclerosis 150 Bay to Bay Bike Ride and raised more than \$2,500 for the charity while riding from Newport Bay to San Diego's Mission Bay. Team members included (l-r); Steve Thronson, Public Health; Janel Alberts, Office of Quality Management (QM); Maria Macias, Environmental Health; Curt Condon, QM; Chad Mai, QM; Tom Dao; and Kerry Wilson, QM.

November Health Observances

American Diabetes Month
National Alzheimer's Disease Month
National Epilepsy Month
Nurse Practitioner Month

Diabetes Education Week November 4-10
Great American Smokeout November 15
National Adoption Week November 19-25